

POLITICAL FIELDS AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: THE EXCLUSION OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Pakistani state's shift from the accommodation to exclusion of the heterodox Ahmadiyya community, a self-defined minority sect of Islam. In 1953, the Pakistani state rejected demands by a religious movement that Ahmadis be legally declared non-Muslim. In 1974 however, the same demand was accepted. This paper argues that this shift in the state's policy toward Ahmadis was contingent on the distinct political fields in which the two religious movements were embedded. Specifically, it points to conjunctures among two processes that defined state-religious movement relations: intrastate struggles for political power, and the framing strategies of religious movements vis-à-vis core symbolic issues rife in the political field. Consequently, the exclusion of Ahmadis resulted from the transformation of the political field itself, characterized by the increasing hegemony of political discourses

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referencing Islam, shift toward electoral politics, and the refashioning of the religious movement through positing the “Ahmadi issue” as a national question pertaining to democratic norms.

In 1953, a group of prominent *ulema*¹ in Pakistan launched a social movement demanding that the state forcibly declare the heterodox Ahmadiyya community (in short Ahmadis) a non-Muslim minority. At this moment, state authorities explicitly rejected this demand. In 1974, Pakistan’s National Assembly responded to the same demand by constitutionally declaring Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority. This paper addresses the following question: why did the Pakistani state shift from including all sections of self-identifying Muslims into the boundaries of Muslim community to forcibly evicting some from the novel legal category of “Muslim”? Relatedly, how can we account for the failure of the religious movement in the first moment and its success in the second?

The genealogy of the Pakistani state’s relationship with the Ahmadis raises a number of intriguing issues. First, it is far from clear why the Pakistani state did not declare Ahmadis non-Muslim in 1953 since the very basis of the creation of Pakistan in 1947 was premised on the “two-nation theory” – the idea that the Muslims and Hindus of the Indian subcontinent constituted two separate nations in every sense of the word. This paper addresses this issue by positing both the moments of accommodation and exclusion of Ahmadis as sites of critical inquiry. Both moments pose questions about the historically fluid ways in which the Pakistani state has constructed its national identity over time through shifting interpretations of the functions of the state and the role of Islam in the political and juridical life of the “imagined political community” of the nation (Anderson, 1991; Brubaker, 2002, 2004; Chatterjee, 1993; Zubrzycki, 2006). Furthermore, this paper approaches these moments both as loose comparative cases (Haydu, 2010) and as events (Sewell, 2005) in the trajectory of consolidation of a Muslim nationalist discourse in Pakistan.

Second, the “Ahmadi issue,” as it is popularly referred to in Pakistan, is a local manifestation of a global turn toward increased importance of religion in public life (Casanova, 1994). This is especially visible with the rise of “political Islam,” a phenomenon referring to the proliferation of Islamic social movements that aspire toward a greater fusion of religion and the state, particularly in the sphere of law (Fuller, 2003). This shift has led to an increasing reliance on “Muslim politics” characterized by “the competition and contest over both the interpretation of [religious] symbols and control

of the institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them” (Eickelman & Piscatori, 1996, p. 5). This phenomenon has been directly addressed by scholars of Islamic social movements who have highlighted the importance of the rich cultural and mobilizational work done by religious leaders on the ground (e.g., Bayat, 2007; Davis & Robinson, 2009; Mahmood, 2005; Tugal, 2009; Wickham, 2002). However, this paper suggests that religious movement outcomes are equally contingent on how religious actors engage in practical politics with state and other political actors.

Using Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory and interventions from social movement theory, particularly frame theory, this paper develops a political fields framework for examining state–religious movement relations to account for politics of nationalist policy formation in Pakistan.² This framework allows an examination of the historical struggles over, and interactions among, political and symbolic power that shaped the contexts in which the two anti-Ahmadi religious movements were embedded. Frame theory allows an examination of the processes through which religious actors fashioned and refashioned themselves across time to acquire symbolic capital at the level of the state. Combining insights from these two approaches, this paper argues that nationalist policies toward Ahmadis were contingent on conjunctures among two processes within historically specific political fields in Pakistan: first, intrastate struggles for political power, and second, the extent to which religious actors aligned their anti-Ahmadi movement frames with core symbolic issues rife in the political field. Consequently, the shift in the state’s nationalist policy toward Ahmadis resulted from a transformation of the political field itself. This transformation was characterized by the increasing hegemony of political discourse referencing Islam, shift toward electoral politics, and the refashioning of anti-Ahmadi religious movement through positing the “Ahmadi issue” as a *national* question pertaining to *democratic* norms. These findings are developed through drawing on government publications, newspapers, and personal interviews conducted with key political actors involved in the exclusion of Ahmadis in 1974.

In what follows, I first elaborate how this paper builds on field theory and frame theory to develop a political fields framework for examining practical politics in Pakistan. I also lay out the main empirical arguments of this paper. The next section gives a brief background of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. The analyses of religious movements and political fields at two main historical junctures follow in which I flesh out my main analytic arguments.

POLITICAL FIELDS AND RELIGIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

A social field is a space of objective positions held by individuals, groups, or institutions determined by the distribution of combinations of various capitals – economic, political, cultural, and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 72; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Each field is the site of struggle over these different forms of capital that can be potentially converted into each other. At stake is “the legitimate principles of the division” of that particular field (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 734). How individual actors act in this framework is determined both by their objective positions in the field and the habitus, that is, the subjectively held meanings and dispositions that produce “regular” practices. In other words, practices are a product of the relation between the habitus and the specific social contexts or fields in which the action takes place. Habitus structures practices through the fuzzy realm of socially agreed upon “practical schemes” specific to a particular field (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 12; also see King, 2000). All members of the field share a belief and an interest in upholding the value of the field-specific capital. Thus, the field is akin to a gaming space such that even when the game takes a highly antagonistic turn, players remain wedded to the game itself and resist attempts at its subversion (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 74). However, because fields are sites of struggle with different actors having different aims, practices are strategically deployed to shape distribution of capitals and occasionally even the *doxa*, that is, the fundamental rules of the game of that particular field.

Building on field theory, Bourdieu argues that the political field is the social space in which struggles over political power take place³ (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu uses the term “political” to refer to democratic politics and “political field” to the social space in which political parties vie with each other. It constitutes the space in which the act of *delegation* takes place whereby professional politicians are entrusted with the task of expressing the will of their constituents. At stake is the acquisition of political capital, or the ability to win votes (Kauppi, 2003). This in turn allows the acquisition of “objectified political power,” or administrative control over public powers such as law, army, police, finances, etc. This is accomplished through struggles over mobilization of groups, a process that entails creation of competing “political products, issues, programmes, analyses, commentaries, concepts and events” among which citizens choose (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 172; also see Bourdieu, 1999). Thus, the political field is the site in which both

symbolic struggles over representation and classification of politically salient categories and political struggles over formal state power are carried out. Both these forms of capital in the political field are potentially convertible into each other.

While these struggles in consolidated democracies are organized around established political parties as Bourdieu maintains, those in postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan routinely include multiple and shifting state and social actors such as bureaucratic elite, military leaders, and religious groups in addition to traditional political parties (e.g., see [Alavi, 1972](#); [Wedeen, 1999](#)). Political fields in such contexts are less “settled” ([Steinmetz, 2007](#)) on the distribution of political and symbolic power. For example in Pakistan, as I discuss below, the very boundaries of the political field are a recurring object of contestation since diverse actors such as Islamists, military rulers, and democratic political parties often hold distinct and antagonistic visions about what constitutes legitimate political authority. Contentious issues pertaining to both formal political power (i.e., which actors and institutions can legitimately hold formal state power) and symbolic power (which actors can legitimately pronounce hegemonic citizenship classifications) have got resolved in different ways at different historical junctures, depending on the very configuration of the political field. It is then not surprising that political fields in Pakistan have undergone frequent transformations. Another significant feature of Pakistan is that elongated periods of military rule⁴ have resulted in periods of highly diminished formal political activity with routine episodes of banning of political parties and detainment of political opposition. However, the very logic of the political field entails that even authoritarian leaders routinely engage in symbolic struggles to acquire political capital, which I define more broadly as political legitimacy.

Because a political fields framework offers a fundamentally relational perspective, it brings to fore the importance of the institutional and discursive relations between different parts of the state. Specifically, it decentralizes the state both into its component institutional parts (e.g., military, bureaucracy, politicians) and distinct imperatives (territorial, coercive, and symbolic) ([Abrams, 1988](#); [Loveman, 2005](#); [Migdal, 2001](#)). In contrast to advanced democracies in which the relative functions of the different branches of the state are clearly demarcated and adhered to, postcolonial state fields are characterized by overlapping of functions and powers across formal institutional lines ([Hansen & Stepputat, 2001](#); [Mamdani, 1996](#)). As a result, different statist interest groups possessing distinct dispositions struggle over the distribution of political capital. At

stake is the articulation of the *doxa* through institutionalizing practices and classifications based on the habitus of the “winners” in a bid to settle the boundaries of the political field (Bourdieu 1993b, p. 74).

A political fields framework also incorporates state–society interactions. State actors in the political field engage in acquisition of symbolic capital through which politically salient collectivities and categories such as family, classes, national groups, ethnicities, etc., are defined (Anderson, 1991; Brubaker, 2002; Corrigan & Sayer, 1985). However, politicized social groups such as religious movement actors also have huge stakes in imposing their own visions of legitimate classifications in the body politic. Although they usually do not possess the resources to directly capture state power, they are centrally invested in directing cultural policies of the state. The aim is to carve out and monopolize a discursive space of political claims-making in order to acquire symbolic capital. Thus, these social actors are players in the political field by virtue of engaging in symbolic struggles with state actors.

As noted above, this paper investigates how anti-Ahmadi religious movements have fared in political fields in Pakistan over time. Of central importance is an examination of social movement repertoires, both practical and discursive, within the political field (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Social movement theorists have underscored *framing* processes as acts of construction of meanings through which movement leaders create “resonance” with potential participants. It is through concrete acts of framing that problems are diagnosed, solutions proposed, and potential participants motivated to undertake action (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). In similar vein, a growing number of studies are investigating the conditions under which Islamic religious movements have mobilized citizens, successfully made political claims, and achieved cultural hegemony (e.g., Bayat, 2007; Davis & Robinson, 2009; Mahmood, 2005; Snow & Byrd, 2007; Tugal, 2009; Wickham, 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2004). However, one important dimension that remains underexamined is the congruence of the habitus of religious actors with the accepted practical schemes that define the implicit “rules” of the political field at any given time.

Below, I show that it is through interactions and conjunctures among two processes that unfold within the political field – one of intrastate struggles for political power and the other of framing strategies of religious movement actors *vis-à-vis* the political field itself – that determined how and why Ahmadis were accommodated by the state in 1954 and excluded in 1974. I argue that in the first moment, the political field was characterized by intrastate struggles among bureaucratic elite and politicians for political

power and state–society struggles over the constitutional relationship between Islam and the Pakistani state. The anti-Ahmadi religious movement was unsuccessful in aligning its movement frames with this core constitutional issue, instead adopting violent anti-Ahmadi and anti-state frames. This enabled bureaucratic elite to wrest political power away from the politicians. The accommodation of Ahmadis emerged from the distinct habitus of the bureaucratic elite which was characterized by authoritarian tendencies and distrust of mass politics and politicized religion.

Subsequently, the boundaries of the political field were transformed through the general elections of 1970 that ushered in the democratically elected regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971–1977). Gaining political power through electoral means and turning the Ahmadi issue into a constitutional debate placed Islamist political parties in a favorable position to push for the nationalist policy of exclusion of Ahmadis. By engaging in framing strategies that appropriated a Muslim nationalist discourse and democratic norms, the religious movement effected the exclusion of Ahmadis, in the process acquiring significant symbolic capital and transforming the *doxa* itself by making Muslim politics hegemonic in the political field.

THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan came into existence in 1947 following British colonial rule in India on the basis of the two-nation theory. This idea purports that Muslims of India constituted a separate nation and thereby deserved a separate homeland to safeguard the interests of the Muslim community. Despite this ideological valorization of a Muslim nationalist ideology, the triangular relationship between the state, religion, and the nation is far from straightforward and has been the site of continual contestation and negotiation among key state and social actors (Binder, 1961; Nasr, 1994; Zaman, 2002). Social movements organized around the issue of the religious status of the Ahmadis have been a principal mode of acquisition of symbolic power for many religious groups (Kaushik, 1996; Saeed, 2007). The two moments of accommodation and exclusion thus present an exciting empirical opportunity for inquiring both into politics of nationalism and nationalism in politics.

The Ahmadi issue has theological, economic, and symbolic dimensions. In terms of Islamic doctrine, the most pivotal point of controversy rests on the issue of the status of the founder of the Ahmadiyya sect Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) who had lived in colonial India and claimed the status

of Prophet but while upholding the supremacy of Prophet Mohammad (Friedmann, 1989). Traditionally, Muslims believe that the Prophet Mohammad is the last prophet to be sent on earth by God and regard Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as an apostate. Furthermore, the Ahmadi conception of the meaning of *jihad* (Holy War) as conducted through the pen (i.e., through arguments and proofs) and not through warfare is viewed suspiciously by orthodox Muslims. Also, Ahmadi leadership openly professed loyalty to British during the colonial era, leading to popularization of (unsubstantiated) claims by religious groups that Ahmadis have historically been disloyal to Pakistan (Lavan, 1973).

The exact number of Ahmadis in Pakistan is an issue of contention. According to the 1998 census conducted by Government of Pakistan, around 96% of the population is Muslim and 0.22% is Ahmadis.⁵ In general, Ahmadis enjoy greater economic well-being than non-Ahmadis because of their higher educational achievements. However, these differences are blown out of proportion by orthodox religious groups as part of their anti-Ahmadi polemics. Hence, perceptions of the wealth of Ahmadis must be regarded as a significant cause of anti-Ahmadi sentiments. That the 1974 Amendment did not subsequently open up jobs for ordinary Muslims in any substantive way is hardly surprising given the extremely small number of the community. Being declared a non-Muslim minority in 1974 essentially barred Ahmadis from occupying the posts of the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan since the Constitution of 1973 declared that only a Muslim could occupy these posts. It further meant that Ahmadis would be able to gain admissions for government jobs, public educational institutions, and federal and provincial legislatures on the basis of their numerical strength, determined by quotas reserved for minorities.

I contend that the most significant dimension of the Ahmadi issue is the nationalist, symbolic one. The term "Muslim" was defined by anti-Ahmadi movements in both time periods to *specifically* exclude Ahmadis on the grounds that Ahmadi theological tenets defied a core Islamic belief in the finality of prophethood. For religious groups in Pakistan, the non-Muslimness of Ahmadis is always-already a "fact." The core political issue lodged in the Ahmadi issue by these religious groups is the symbolic relationship between religion and the state in Pakistan. Hence, the categorization of Ahmadis as non-Muslim in 1974 did not become a means for the state to undertake moral regulation of its citizens in their day-to-day life. In terms of practicing Islam in the public space, the Amendment had no practical effects on religious freedoms of Ahmadis who continued to practice and preach their religion with impunity. This situation changed in 1984 when

the military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq promulgated an Ordinance that makes it a criminal offense for Ahmadis to refer to themselves as Muslim or to practice Islam in public. It explicitly renders these as acts of “posing as Muslims” and makes any Ahmadi who “outrages the religious feelings of Muslims” liable to fines and imprisonment.⁶ Thus, the 1974 Amendment laid the groundwork for the moral regulation and state policing of the Muslim/non-Muslim distinction. In this paper, however, the core symbolic issue that I discuss is the contested issue of the Pakistani state’s relationship with Islam.

THE POLITICS OF ACCOMMODATION OF AHMADIS

In this section, I will explain the nationalist policy of accommodation of Ahmadis by the Pakistani state in 1953. My analysis proceeds in three parts. First, I analyze debates on the constitutional relationship between Islam and the Pakistani state between 1947 and 1952. I depict the symbolic centrality of this issue in the political field and lay out the central political and religious interlocutors and their position-takings in this debate. Next, I analyze the anti-Ahmadi movement and show that not only did it remain unsuccessful in creating resonance among its anti-Ahmadi demands and the issue of the relationship between religion and state but it also unwittingly became the means for bureaucratic elite to wrest formal political power from politicians. Last, I examine the habitus of the bureaucratic elite and its relationship with the accommodation of Ahmadis.

Constitutional Debates Over Religion and the State, 1947–1952

A significant geopolitical feature characterizing the Pakistani state at the time of independence in 1947 was the territorial structure of the Pakistani state, consisting of two “wings” – East and West Pakistan – and separated by some 1,000 miles with India lying in between. While the East wing, which emerged as independent Bangladesh in 1970, was ethnically homogenous, the West wing was composed of four provinces that were constituted along ethnic lines. Ethnic tensions resulting from such divisions have been endemic since the formative postcolonial period and have necessitated attempts at a centralizing ideology for central state actors (Baxter, 1997). Inevitably, the

issue of the Pakistani state's relationship with Islam has been central to these recurring ideological debates.

The political field in the immediate postcolonial period was characterized by multiplicity of nationalist discourses on the relationship between religion and the state in Pakistan. The most significant site in which this debate took place was the Constituent Assembly that was given the task of framing a constitution. Its members had been determined through indirect elections held in 1946 under British colonial rule. There were only two political parties in the Constituent Assembly – the Muslim League Party (ML) that had spearheaded the Muslim nationalist movement in British India under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Congress Party representing Hindu and other religious minorities. Jinnah was appointed as the first President of the Constituent Assembly.

Within the Constituent Assembly itself, two prominent narratives emerged during this time – a liberal-secular discourse and a Muslim nationalist discourse. Both of these positions emerged as opposing conceptions of the national community during the course of constitutional debates. The first narrative was issued by Jinnah in the first session of the Constituent Assembly four days prior to the independence of Pakistan. Here, Jinnah explicitly held that the basis of inclusion in Pakistan was political citizenship and not religion. For the “Father of the Nation,” as Jinnah is referred to in Pakistan, religion and the state were two separate entities (*Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates (henceforth CAP), August 11, 1947, p. 20*). However, in subsequent debates in the Constituent Assembly on the preamble of the constitution termed the Objectives Resolution that took place in 1949 following Jinnah's death, a Muslim nationalist discourse was given political salience by ML. Of the 11 clauses of the Objectives Resolution, explicit reference to Islam appears in 3. For example, while not declared an Islamic state in which the law of the land would be based on *shari'a*,⁷ its first clause poses a hierarchy of sovereigns for the new polity – Allah, the State, and the People:

Sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Allah Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan, through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust.

The non-Muslim, Congress members of the Constituent Assembly rigorously opposed the Objectives Resolution on ground of its religious character, noting that its adoption may hinder the development of democracy in Pakistan by giving way to repressive interpretations of Islam (*CAP, March 8, 1949, pp. 13–14*). Instead, they argued for a more universal basis

for protection of citizenship rights such as found in the United Nations Charter (CAP, March 9, 1949, p. 36). However, these minority voices were marginalized and the Objectives Resolution adopted through a majority ML vote.

Although the members of the Constituent Assembly were split along religious lines with Muslim members voting unanimously for the Resolution and non-Muslim members objecting to it on liberal-secular grounds, the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly held radically different conceptions of the relationship between religion and the state. On the one end of the spectrum was Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani, perhaps the most prominent member of the *ulema* in Pakistan at the time. Uthmani supported the Objectives Resolution by maintaining that Islam did not accept “the view that religion is a private affair between man and his creator and as such has no bearing upon the social or political relations of human beings” (CAP, March 9, 1949). Uthmani made a case for the complete fusion of religion and state in his speech even though the Objectives Resolution did not explicitly endorse such a position. On the other end of the spectrum was Mian Iftikharuddin, an ardent socialist and the only Muslim member of the Constituent Assembly to express disapproval of the Objectives Resolution for falling short in “the field of political, economic and social justice” (CAP, March 10, 1949, p. 52). Iftikharuddin concurred with Congress Party members that the first clause of the Resolution could be readily construed as vesting sovereignty in the state and not directly in the representatives chosen by the people. However for Iftikharuddin, the crucial question was how to turn Pakistan into a “dynamic democracy” and the answer was to be found in socialism and not Islam (p. 53). In between these two positions lay other ML members such as Zafrullah Khan, the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan and the only Ahmadi in the Constituent Assembly. Zafrullah Khan defended the Objectives Resolution’s clause that requires the state to make provisions enabling Muslims to order their lives in accordance with principles of Islam, maintaining that such provisions would not be binding on the non-Muslim minorities (CAP, March 12, 1949, p. 67). Zafrullah Khan argued that democracy entailed that “political authority should be exercised through representatives freely chosen by the people” (p. 68). As long as this condition was met, Islam could only aid the quality of democracy.

That these widely different personalities with distinct and differing visions of the relationship between religion and the state could agree on the Objectives Resolution is only explicable when one considers that all the clauses referencing Islam were only nominal in nature. More significantly,

the adoption of the Objectives Resolution as the unified voice of the ML consolidated the party's political standing as well as conferred significant symbolic capital to it, as was witnessed by the wide praise with which the Resolution was met across the country.

The Islamists constituted another site of agency within the political field and were crucial in shaping the content of the Objectives Resolution.⁸ Here, I want to note the influence of one of the most influential Islamist of Pakistan Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Maududi (1903–1979) who founded the Islamist political party *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JI) in colonial India in 1941. While initially ambivalent about the creation of Pakistan, Maududi subsequently undertook a campaign for an “Islamic Constitution.” This became an increasingly public project and a concerted effort under independent Pakistan, routinely arousing the ire of state authorities who periodically banned the JI's publications and detained Maududi in the years between 1947 and 1958 (Nasr, 1994, pp. 103–146). While Uthmani was led toward constitutional debates because of his political position as a member of the Constituent Assembly, Maududi's entire political project in these years rested on proposing a blueprint for the Pakistani constitution that would make *shari'a* the law of the land and crucially transform the entire social fabric of Pakistan (Maududi, 1980, p. 101). Maududi was also an avid critic of ML politicians who, he claimed, used Islamic rhetoric for political ends and thereby lacked commitment to the demands of a genuine Islamic state.

In the time period preceding the Constituent Assembly debates, JI made overtures to the *ulema* through Uthmani in a bid to join hands in the struggle to influence the content of the Objectives Resolution. Uthmani became the medium through which Maududi sought to legitimize his own vision of Pakistan's future constitution in the political field. It was through these combined efforts that references to Islam came to occupy such a central place in the Objectives Resolution. When the Objectives Resolution was passed, JI proclaimed it as a victory for itself, implicitly suggesting that Uthmani had served as a conduit for Maududi's vision (Nasr, 1994, p. 124). One ML politician subsequently observed that references to Islam were made solely to satisfy Uthmani (Hyat Khan, 1995, p. 220).

However, debates on the constitutional relationship between Islam and the state were far from over with the passing of the Objectives Resolution. This crystallized most starkly during public debates on the constitution of Pakistan. In December 1952, the Basic Principles Committee (BPC), a Committee set up by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan to work out the details of the Constitution, presented a second draft of its Report.⁹ This

report was scrutinized by publics across the country. While several aspects of it were heatedly discussed in the press, the issue that centrally concerns us here is its proposal about the formation of a Board composed of *ulema*. It was proposed that this Board be charged with the task of determining whether the bills passed in Federal and Provincial Legislatures were “repugnant to the Holy Quran and *Sunnah*.” If yes, the Board would suggest the proper lines along which the Bill should be reframed. It would then be necessary for the Legislature to incorporate the changes in the Bill.

The *Ulema* Board clause met with huge outcry from different sections of the population, both from those in favor of the presence of religion in politics and those against it. For the former group, the BPC Report was not Islamic enough. Thus in response, a group of *ulema* and Islamists including Maududi held a convention and presented their own model of BPC Report. A few of the amendments proposed were compulsory education of Quran and Islamic teachings in the educational system; prohibition through legislation of “the propagation of atheism and infidelity and the insulting or ridiculing of the Holy Qur’an or the *Sunnah*”; “the Quran and the *Sunnah* be the chief source of the law of land”; and that the name of the state be changed from Pakistan to the “Islamic Republic of Pakistan” (Maududi 1980, p. 348). On the other end, liberal-seculars expressed their discontent with the religious character of the BPC Report. For example, the editorial of *Dawn* warned that the country was in danger of slipping into “Ulemacracy” (*Dawn*, Karachi, January 24, 1953). Political leaders such as Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Chief Minister of NWFP Province, rejected the BPC Report for taking power away from the people and putting it in hands of *ulema* (*The Pakistan Times*, Karachi, January 1, 1953). In response to these critiques, the Constituent Assembly moved to adjourn consideration of the BPC Report to a later date. When the first Constitution of Pakistan was finally approved in 1956, it contained no reference to *Ulema* Boards.

This discussion gives a snapshot of the symbolic terrain on which the constitutional issue of the relationship between religion and Islam was contested in the political field in Pakistan. It characterized the discursive space in which the anti-Ahmadi religious movement, to which I turn next, was launched. In the next section, I argue that the failure of the anti-Ahmadi movement to discursively align its movement frames with this core symbolic issue and its adoption of violent anti-Ahmadi and anti-state frames enabled bureaucratic elite to wrest political power from ML politicians in a struggle to reconfigure the very boundaries of the political field.

The Anti-Ahmadiyya Movement

Anti-Ahmadi movements have a long history in Pakistan. Even before the creation of Pakistan, right-wing religious groups, most notably the *Majlis-e-Ahrar-Islam* (in short, *Ahrar*), a Muslim political organization formed in 1931, were agitating against the Ahmadis, portraying them as heretics (Jalal, 2000; Lahore High Court (henceforth LHC) 1954; Lavan, 1973). In Pakistan, the demand that Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority was first made by *Ahrar* in 1949. The passing of the Objectives Resolution gave the *Ahrar* leadership impetus to make their anti-Ahmadi demands public (Nasr, 1994). As early as 1950, state executive authorities began paying attention to the content of anti-Ahmadi rhetoric that was being spread across Punjab by *Ahrar* leaders. Typically in these meetings, writings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya community, were misquoted and “twisted and obscene and indecent inferences drawn”; he and other community leaders described as “adulterers and given to unnatural indulgences”; Ahmadis described as traitors to Pakistan; Zafrullah Khan verbally abused and “often described as an ‘ass’ and as a ‘knave’”; and lists of Ahmadi army and civil officers handed out (LHC, 1954, p. 20). Especially alarming for state authorities were statements that could readily be interpreted as incitements toward anti-Ahmadi violence. For example, one *Ahrar* leader often said in his speeches that if Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had claimed prophethood in his lifetime, he would have killed him with his own hands. It was also noted that on a few occasions, such statements led to audience members volunteering to kill prominent Ahmadi members.

As more and more *ulema* began to be sympathetic to the *Ahrar* cause, Punjab politicians began taking notice of the movement. With Punjab provincial elections approaching in March of 1951, prominent politicians such as Mumtaz Daultana, the Chief Minister of the province, began to use anti-Ahmadi propaganda as a platform for winning support among the electorate (Nasr, 1994). Furthermore, with economic crises and food shortages rampant in the summer of 1952, religious groups became active in channeling the social unrest into religious grievances. In May of 1952, *Ahrar* and some prominent *ulema* formed a *Majlis-e-Amal* (Council of Action) and formally adopted the demand that Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority, Zafrullah Khan removed from his post, and Ahmadis be removed from all key government jobs.

During this time, *Ahrar* enlisted the support of JI. Maududi entered into an alliance with the *Ahrar* reluctantly and cautiously since his own Islamist project of a constitutional Islamic state militated against the

passionate and violent denunciations by *Ahrar* leaders against Ahmadis and eventually state authorities. The involvement of Maududi can be explained by the symbolic struggles over the relationship between religion and the state in the political field that I have recounted above. In order to capitalize on the anti-Ahmadi movement but without aligning his JI too closely with the *Majlis-e-Amal* dominated by *Ahrar*, Maududi incorporated the demand that Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority into his constitutional blueprint that was developed in response to the second BPC Report that I have discussed above (Maududi, 1980, p. 362). According to Maududi, the issue was to be decided through constitutional means and not through staging riots or partaking in violent actions. Here, the movement came the closest to aligning its demands with the core symbolic issue of the constitutional relationship between Islam and the state that was rife in the political field at that time.

Between July of 1952 and January of 1953, the *Ahrar*-led agitation became more confrontational toward the state despite public statements by Punjab ML leaders and Prime Minister Nazimuddin that they were sympathetic to the *Ahrar* cause (LHC, 1954). Increasingly, the *Ahrar* began to undertake violent and disruptive activities, utilizing newspapers and pamphlets as mediums for coordinating riotous large-scale meetings, issuing threats to state authorities, and inciting violence against Ahmadis. As the movement proceeded, it turned from an agitation directed against the Ahmadis into one directed against the state. The significant shift that took place at this time was the employment of the trope of “direct action,” a euphemism for large-scale riots that were eventually staged. Daily reports appeared in newspapers such as the *Zamindar* (Lahore) to the effect that all efforts were being made and volunteers being recruited in thousands to march to Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, on a certain date, so as to give public demonstrations and picket the residences of the Governor-General and Prime Minister of Pakistan (e.g., *Zamindar*, Lahore, February 19, 1953). The government was quick to respond by arresting prominent leaders of *Ahrar* and declaring Martial Law in Lahore to quell the movement.

In face of *Ahrar*'s violent movement repertoires and framing strategies, JI disassociated itself formally from the *Majlis-e-Amal* in February of 1953. Sympathetic politicians such as Prime Minister Nazimuddin increasingly started taking a hardened position toward *Ahrar*. With their anti-Ahmadi and anti-state framing strategies, the *Ahrar* placed themselves in direct opposition to executive state authorities. While Maududi did attempt to articulate the anti-Ahmadi demands as a constitutional issue, ultimately

Maududi adopted the anti-Ahmadi rhetoric of the *Ahrar* through the publication of a pamphlet titled “*Qadiani Masalah*” or the “Ahmadi Problem” (Maududi, 1953) for which he was ultimately charged and given the death sentence for inciting “feelings of enmity and hatred between different groups in Pakistan.”

As I have noted above, Pakistan came into existence under the leadership of Jinnah who was elected as the first President of the Constituent Assembly. While Jinnah was alive, he also held on to the position of Governor-General, a colonial office that was retained in Pakistan to serve a ceremonial function in order to preserve a symbolic continuity with the authority of the British colonial state. However, Jinnah invested this office with considerable executive powers (Khan, 2005). When the anti-Ahmadi movement was launched, the position of Governor-General was occupied by a powerful bureaucrat Ghulam Mohammad. At this moment, the bureaucrats as an interest group were players in the political field and were in the process of consolidating a powerful bureaucratic-military oligarchy in direct opposition to the elected politicians (Jalal, 1991; Talbot, 1998).

The anti-Ahmadi movement brought to fore the unsettled issue of which state actors within the political field held legitimate authority to decide the religious status of Ahmadis. In the context of the Constituent Assembly’s failure to frame a constitution that could meet a broad consensus in Pakistani society and the absence of general elections that would have determined who the legitimate legislative state actors were, the movement became a means through which different state actors in the political field vied for formal state power. As the movement started becoming more violent, Ghulam Mohammad ordered the Army to impose Pakistan’s first Martial Law over the city of Lahore. Ghulam Mohammad also made Nazimuddin government’s inability to deal decisively with movement agitators the pretext for dismissing it in April of 1953. The arrests of prominent *ulema* and Islamists, the dissolution of central government and the imposition of Martial Law became events in the reconfiguration of the political field by the bureaucratic elite. Subsequently in October of 1954, after the religious movement had been suppressed by executive state authorities, Ghulam Mohammad dismissed the Constituent Assembly altogether. This move was eventually challenged in the Federal Court of Pakistan where Chief Justice of Pakistan Mohammad Munir declared this act of dissolution legal.¹⁰ The new Cabinet set up by Ghulam Mohammad contained several high-level military officials, thus paving the way for the Army’s eventual ascendancy in Pakistani politics (McGrath, 1996).

The political field on the whole was severely compromised by these usurpations of political power which reconfigured the political field by criminalizing *ulema* and Islamists and marginalizing politicians. Furthermore, the Ahmadi issue provided the bureaucratic elite with a discursive space to impose their own symbolic vision of the relationship between religion and the state in Pakistan. The most salient document here is the Report of the Inquiry Commission formed in 1953 to probe into the anti-Ahmadi agitation to which I turn next. The Inquiry Commission was led by Justice Munir and provides a core document for inquiring into the habitus of the bureaucratic elite.

Habitus of the Bureaucratic Elite and the Accommodation of Ahmadis

Although bureaucrats did not participate in popular constitutional debates in the political field, they eventually advanced their own vision of the relationship between religion and the state from which the nationalist policy of the accommodation of Ahmadis emerged. These bureaucrats, both civil and military, possessed a distinct habitus that took shape under the British colonial regime. The relationship between military and civilian establishment in Pakistan was strikingly similar to the one that had existed between the British Indian Army and the British colonial state. According to one historian of the Pakistani army, “the (British) Indian Army, from its very inception, was trained to be the ‘custodian of law and order’ and to promote colonial interests at the cost of different indigenous and regional interests within the subcontinent” (Hashmi, 1983, p. 149). This relationship continued into the immediate postcolonial period, with the Pakistani Army remaining predisposed toward maintaining internal order at the behest of executive authorities in addition to tasks of defense and external security.

Furthermore, the structure of the bureaucracy in the immediate post-colonial period was a continuation of its colonial predecessor (Alavi, 1983). Postcolonial state elite often remain imbued with colonial dispositions about local populations as subjects to be ruled over rather than citizens to which they are responsible (Mamdani, 1996). Indigenous members of the colonial bureaucracy who opted to join Pakistan upon independence continued to enjoy discretionary, arbitrary powers in collusion with the provincial and local police. Hamza Alavi has noted that these “bureaucrats were brought up on the myth of ‘guardianship,’ the idea that it was their mission to defend the interests of the people as against the supposed partisanship of and personal ambitions of ‘professional’ politicians”

(Alavi, 1983, p. 66). That the bureaucrats could undermine the authority of politicians by overstepping their traditional roles as administrators was noted by contemporaries such as the socialist Mian Iftikharuddin who during the course of Constituent Assembly debates in 1952 explicitly critiqued the presence of bureaucrats in ministries formed by the Muslim League, noting that those charged with matters relating to defense and internal affairs in Pakistan had served under the British colonial state and were administrators rather than politicians (Toor, 2011, p. 40).

The Munir Inquiry Report led by Justice Munir combines the secular dispositions of the higher judiciary of Pakistan at that time (Lau, 2006) with the authoritarian ones of the bureaucrats. The Report states at the beginning that it uses the term “Muslim” to refer to “the general body of Muslims who do not believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad” and “Ahmadi” to those “who believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet” (LHC, 1954, p. 9). This politics of naming suggests that the judges deliberately distanced themselves from the issue of the religious status of the Ahmadis. During the course of the judicial inquiry, the *ulema* brought before it argued that their anti-Ahmadi demands were based on the promise of an Islamic state contained in the Objectives Resolution. This, according to the judges, was an erroneous assumption since the Objectives Resolution was equally premised on two mutually contradictory principles: first, democratic ideals that vest sovereignty in the people, and second, on the ideals of an Islamic state that vests sovereignty in Allah. The state could either be Islamic or it could be democratic (p. 210). The judges drew on Jinnah’s historic speech before the Constituent Assembly to espouse liberal-secular ideals: “The future subject of the State is to be a citizen with equal rights, privileges and obligations, irrespective of colour, caste, creed or community” (p. 203). Consequently, “faith is a matter for the individual and however, false, dishonest or ridiculous it may appear to be to another, it may still be held sincerely and honestly by the person who professes it” (p. 279).

Politicized religion, on the other hand, is a vehicle for disorder and “an embodiment of complete intellectual paralysis” (p. 220). The judges questioned a host of *ulema* on their views on what constitutes an Islamic state and what defines a Muslim. Based on a range of differing opinions that were put forth, judges concluded that the *ulema* “were hopelessly disagreed among themselves” on the very important question of who was a Muslim (p. 36). Furthermore, the judges linked their distrust of politicized religion with populism, noting that “the masses” can be set on “any course of action, regardless of all considerations of discipline, loyalty, decency, morality or civic sense” if convinced on religious grounds (p. 231). This narrative about

politicized religion was woven into a specific colonialist view of the people as devoid of “intelligence,” without “a sufficiently developed mind” and to be “led” by “the leaders” (p. 275). But these leaders cannot be the politicians. The Report strongly reproached politicians for their failure to deal firmly with the Islamist movement. Political parties and leaders are characterized as exploiters of religion. The Report distinguishes between the legislative functions of the politicians and the governance functions of the executive, explicitly privileging the latter over the former. The Ahmadis emerge as the victims, the silent minority being used by corrupt political and Islamist parties to further selfish and politically motivated interests. The outcome then was what I have termed the accommodation of Ahmadis.

In short, this period in Pakistan was defined by a political field characterized by embedded struggles between various state and social actors over the symbolic, religious dimensions of the state. The anti-Ahmadi movement remained unsuccessful in aligning its movement frames with these symbolic struggles. Unwittingly, it created the space for the bureaucratic elite to deploy coercive tactics both *vis-à-vis* the politicians and the anti-Ahmadi movement in a bid for political power through reconfiguring the boundaries of the political field at that time. They then proceeded to legitimate their dispositions about religion, mass politics, and politicians through an illiberal, secular nationalism in an attempt to convert political power into symbolic capital.

BETWEEN ACCOMMODATION AND EXCLUSION

A number of significant shifts took place in the period between the two moments of accommodation and exclusion that were crucial for setting the stage for the transformation of the political field in Pakistan. The most significant trajectory constituting this shift was the one spanning the consolidation of military authoritarianism in the 1960s and the emergence of the democratically elected regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1971. The military regime of Ayub Khan (1958–1969) witnessed attempts at distancing of the state from popular expressions of religion. In line with the military habitus of those times, Ayub Khan was highly suspicious of what he perceived as the use of Islam by political and Islamist parties (Khan, 1967). The constitution of 1962 dropped “Islamic” from the country’s name, thereby renaming Pakistan the “Republic of Pakistan.” On the political front, it instituted a Presidential system through a system

of local representation termed Basic Democracies. Political parties were thereby banned. However, both these moves came under heavy criticism and had to be quickly remodified. The Political Parties Act of 1962 removed the ban on political parties, while the First Constitutional Amendment Act of 1963 re-inserted the term “Islamic” in Pakistan’s name. The Ayub regime, however, witnessed the promulgation of the *Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961*¹¹ (MFLO) that explicitly brought the laws governing the domestic space of marital and other familial relationships under state regulation. Overall, the Ayub regime was decisive in pointing toward the failure of the “secular” project in Pakistan as Ayub Khan increasingly began to rely on “Islamic modernism” (i.e., state-directed liberal Islam as, for example, envisioned in MFLO) and associate with Islamist parties to manage political opposition from popular, leftist, and secular groups (Nasr, 1994, pp. 152–155). In other words, Muslim politics as a form of practical politics began gaining increasing legitimacy in the political field as military elite under the leadership of Ayub Khan began abandoning their earlier dispositions about expelling religion from politics. Essentially, this meant the legitimization of practical politics associated with mobilization of citizens.

Because of increasing discontent among the citizenry about the undemocratic structure of the state, manifested among other things through the student and labor demonstrations of 1968 and opposition in East Pakistan to West Pakistan’s disproportionate share of economic and political capital, President Ayub Khan turned over power to his trusted General Yahya Khan in 1969 who proceeded to hold Pakistan’s first general elections in 1970 (Talbot, 1998, pp. 179–188). In the closing years of 1960s, leftist parties such as Bhutto’s Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Wali Khan’s National Awami Party (NAP) emerged as prominent contenders for political power. As elections of 1970s neared, Bhutto’s PPP emerged as the major national party with a popular manifesto of “*Islam is our faith; Democracy is our Polity; Socialism is our Economy.*” During the election campaign, PPP identified itself as a mass populist party with its election slogan of “*roti, kapra aur makan*” (Bread, cloth and home). Furthermore, to counter claims by religious groups that socialism was fundamentally in contradiction with religion, Bhutto espoused a discourse of “Islamic socialism,” arguing that Islamic egalitarian principles were in perfect accord with those of socialism (Burki, 1988, p. 53).

Eventually, the socialist government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to office in 1971 in the wake of Pakistan’s war with India and following the loss of significant territory through the creation of the independent state of

Bangladesh. While elected, the regime's claim to being democratic remained tenuous because of the conditions under which Bhutto's PPP came to power. If the postelection period had not resulted in the independence of Bangladesh, Bhutto would not have enjoyed the majority that he did after 1971. However, that he was the most popular leader in what remained of Pakistan is uncontested.

When the second anti-Ahmadi movement was launched in 1974, the political field was centered on the democratically elected National Assembly and did not include military or bureaucratic elite, who had for various historical reasons stepped away from claims to state power at this time (Alavi, 1983, p. 76; Ziring, 1980, p. 105). This Assembly contained a broad spectrum of political parties and ideological positions. The ruling party was the PPP that held around 60% of the seats. The various Islamist parties in the opposition together held around 12% of the seats. The main opposition was formed by an alliance between NAP and the Islamist party *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI) with NAP's leader Wali Khan elected as the leader of the opposition.

The reconfiguration of the political field through the entry of elected political parties, including Islamist parties committed to the game of electoral politics, redefined practical politics in the political field. One of the most salient features of this changed political field was the acceptance of the symbolic relevance of "Islam." The loss of Bangladesh was a significant intervening event in legitimating Islam *in its nominal capacity* within the political field in the 1970s. It posed the fundamental question about whether a common Islamic identity could transcend provincial and ethnic identities. Furthermore, with the break-up of Pakistan, both Bangladesh and India had a greater number of Muslims within their individual territories than Pakistan. One scholar observes that "now that Pakistan ... [was] no more the 'national homeland' for all, or even most, Muslims of the subcontinent, its *raison d'être* must be that it is the home of the good Muslims" (Ahmad, 1983, p. 116). Thus, Islam was to continue to provide a "centralizing ideology" through playing a more prominent role in the state. This is reflected in the Constitution of 1973 in which Islam was declared the "state religion." While no legislative measures were taken, the fact that Islam had to be increasingly referenced to make claims to political authority meant that the political field was ripe for exercise of agency that could push Islam from having a nominal to an institutional role. The first manifestation of this shift was the enactment of a constitutional amendment rendering Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority to which I turn next.

THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION OF AHMADIS

The Anti-Ahmadiyya Movement

The “Ahmadi question” emerged on the national scene in 1974 following a scuffle between non-Ahmadi and Ahmadi students in the city of Rabwah, a predominantly Ahmadi town. According to popular newspaper accounts, the Ahmadi “crowd” was armed with sticks, knives, and swords, and proceeded to attack and beat the “Muslim” students, injuring 30 in the process. The state immediately appointed a High Court judge, K. M. A. Samdani, to investigate the incident and submit his findings, thus instituting what is popularly termed the “Rabwah Tribunal.” It was subsequently determined by this Tribunal that claims of violent beatings of non-Ahmadi students by Ahmadi students were wildly exaggerated and mostly inaccurate.¹² However, the immediate response to the incident was that acts of violence against the Ahmadis started (*Dawn*, Karachi, June 23, 1974). While these were curbed by the state within a week, a nation-wide movement spearheaded by religious groups was launched that advocated the social boycotting of Ahmadis and demanded that the state declare Ahmadis non-Muslim. A minor skirmish thereby provided a political opening that was seized upon by religious leaders to relaunch an anti-Ahmadi movement.

While initially silent on the question of the religious status of Ahmadis, prominent leaders of PPP including Bhutto publicly declared their faith in the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood and affirmed the Islamic identity of Pakistan. In a speech in the National Assembly, Bhutto referred to the Ahmadi issue as a “problem” that dated back to 1953 but noted that the categories of minorities had been defined in the 1973 constitution and that no party or individual had raised the issue of the minority status of Ahmadis at that point. Bhutto concluded that the Ahmadi issue was being used by his political opponents to ignite trouble and weaken Pakistan. The government, he declared, “had no vested interest in the problem,” was taking a “rational view” and “trying to apply universal morality to the issue” (*Dawn*, Karachi, June 4, 1974). Soon thereafter, however, Bhutto announced that the Ahmadi issue would be placed before the National Assembly for deliberation.

In order to understand the shift in Bhutto’s inclinations, we must examine the framing strategies of the religious movement in 1974. First, this movement was national in scope and included a wide array of social and political actors including Islamist parties in the National Assembly, student unions, trade unions, *petit-ulema* in local mosques across the country who

sent in petitions to national newspapers to express support with the movement, *Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuz Khatm-e-Nubuwwat* (“International Association for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood,” henceforth MTKN) and prominent political leaders. Furthermore, some of these groups had been dedicated to the movement goals even prior to the Rabwah incident. For example, MTKN was formed in 1949 as a religious platform for those members of the *Ahrar* who sought to undertake the anti-Ahmadi “cause” but in the capacity of their religious and not political identities.¹³ The emphasis on the religious/political dichotomy is meant to underscore the purity of the religiously motivated individual in contrast to the conniving of the politically motivated individual. Even before 1974, prominent members and supporters of MTKN propagated anti-Ahmadi rhetoric through print media. For example, Agha Shorash Kashmiri, a highly prominent Urdu journalist and *Ahrar* member used his weekly Urdu magazine *Chattan* as a vehicle for keeping the anti-Ahmadi movement alive. While the first anti-Ahmadi movement had utilized public meetings and fiery orators to incite orthodox Muslims against Ahmadis and draw the attention of politicians, the refashioned MTKN confined its violence to the print media, carefully skirting the thin line between freedom of speech and hate speech.¹⁴

Second, the country was gripped in anti-Ahmadi fervor and the pressure on the state to act according to “popular” demand was intense. Anti-Ahmadi demands were couched within public narratives about the state’s responsibility toward Islam. For example, an editorial referred to Bhutto not only as a politician but also as a “religious representative” (*Nawa-e-Waqt*, Lahore, June 14, 1974). The celebrated journalist Z. A. Suleri celebrated the Rabwah incident as “a blessing in disguise” for throwing into “bold relief the truly religious character of Pakistani society” (*Nawa-e-Waqt*, Lahore, June 23, 1974). Furthermore, the demands were couched within rhetoric of democracy, with various organizations, opposition members, and newspapers demanding that the state act in a democratic manner. An editorial in *Dawn* argued that the Islamist opposition in the National Assembly was within its democratic right to express dissent and canvass popular support for its demands (*Dawn*, Karachi, June 7, 1974).

Third, the state response in 1954 was cited as an instance of state repression (Saeed, 2007). As anti-Ahmadi agitation continued to grow in 1974, Bhutto was confronted with a choice: revert to the historical precedent of cracking down on religious movement to thwart anti-Ahmadi demands, or to engage somehow with the demands. Certainly, Bhutto routinely engaged in highly draconian measures to repress oppositional movements.

For example in 1973, Bhutto carried out an extremely violent military operation in the province of Baluchistan to curb a movement demanding greater regional autonomy (Jaffrelot, 2002, pp. 28–32). Subsequently in 1975, Bhutto would dissolve NAP and arrest Wali Khan. During this time, Bhutto cracked down not only on regional movements but also on labor movements (Ali, 2010), and his particularly feudalistic modes of torturing and humiliating opposition are well documented (e.g., Burki, 1988; Wolpert, 1993).

However, suppression of the anti-Ahmadi movement was not undertaken as a matter of considered policy toward religion. First, the PPP had aligned itself with popular religious sentiments through its discourse of Islamic socialism. It was precisely because Bhutto combined authoritarianism with religious populism that his regime defies the democracy/authoritarian distinction. While nominal, this identification with Islam was symbolically potent, circumscribing the range of actions available to Bhutto. More significantly, Bhutto came to dominance in the political field through a populist mode of electoral campaign that was novel in Pakistani politics. Bhutto emerged as a charismatic leader through “a folksy and colorful campaign” in which large portraits of Bhutto, Bhutto’s performative theatrics during public rallies (such as passionate shouting accompanied with rolling up his sleeves, opening his shirt front), catchy slogans centered on Bhutto (“Our Bhutto is truly a lion while the others are merely devious”), etc., were the norm (Syed, 1992, pp. 68–79). This extreme self-posturing as a man of the people meant that while Bhutto could take radical steps to repress political opponents, he was compelled to engage with a truly nationwide religious movement making demands on his government.

According to Sahabzada Farooq Ali, the Speaker of National Assembly in 1974, Bhutto had received a lot of support from the Ahmadis during his election campaign of 1970 and enjoyed close ties with several Ahmadis.¹⁵ Farooq Ali also had close ties with the Ahmadis that had organically emerged over time because of a huge presence of Ahmadis in his electoral constituencies of cities of Sialkot and Gujarat. However, for both Bhutto and himself, the core issue was not one of religion but of a popular demand that had to be met. Similarly, Raja Tridev Roy, the Minister of Minority Affairs and Tourism at that time, maintains that Bhutto’s acquiescence on the Ahmadi issue was not reflective of Bhutto’s personal views or wishes but arose from “a misplaced sense of self-preservation” and as a means to neutralize the Islamic rhetoric of opposition parties.¹⁶

The particular frames adopted by the anti-Ahmadi religious movement and the mutual legibility between these frames and Bhutto’s nationalist

discourses led to the issue of the religious status of Ahmadis being placed before the National Assembly. A motion passed by the Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada “to discuss the question of the status in Islam of persons who do not believe in the finality of Prophethood of Mohammad” was adopted in the hope to arrive at “an effective, just and final solution” (National Assembly of Pakistan Debates (henceforth NAPD), June 30, 1974, pp. 1302–1303). The National Assembly was subsequently converted into a Special Committee to debate the religious status of Ahmadis. Bhutto himself employed discursive frames of democracy and Muslim nationalism to laud the Amendment. In his speech in the National Assembly on the day the Amendment was passed, Bhutto maintained that the resolution of the Ahmadi question was fundamentally a religious issue that required a “genuine resolution” because

Pakistan came into creation for the Muslims to have a homeland; and if a decision is taken which the body of Muslims in this country feel to be against the tenets of the fundamental beliefs of Islam, it would dangerously affect the rationale and *raison d’être* of Pakistan. (NAPD, September 7, 1974, p. 566)

Bhutto hailed the decision as one of democratic triumph, maintaining that the decision could not have been taken “without democratic institutions.” The editorial of the English daily *Dawn* echoed this sentiment:

The manner in which the decision was taken augurs well for the growth of democracy in the country. Constitutionality is the breath of life in a democracy. The same decision coming as an official decree would not have meant the same thing. (*Dawn*, Karachi, September 10, 1974)

Thus “democracy” and a Muslim nationalist discourse formed the central symbolic contours of the political debate on the religious status of the Ahmadis in 1974. It is within this symbolic terrain that Members of National Assembly (MNAs) engaged with the issue of the religious status of Ahmadis. Next, I analyze the *habitus* of these actors that led to the nationalist policy of exclusion of Ahmadis.

Habitus of Political Actors and the Exclusion of Ahmadis

During the proceedings in the National Assembly, the Ahmadi leadership was invited to present their views and to answer questions posed by MNAs. The crucial issue at this moment was not the definition of a Muslim but the specific issue of whether the Ahmadis were Muslim according to an accepted definition of a non-Muslim as any person who does not believe in the

unqualified finality of prophethood in the person of Prophet Mohammad. Pamphlets and books were distributed by Islamist parties in the National Assembly to give an “authentic” description of the Ahmadiyya community’s “political history” (a creation of the British colonial state “to disintegrate the unity of the Muslims”); religious precepts (false and doubly dangerous because they are presented as true Islam); social organization (self-separatist), its political ambitions (take over Pakistan); and its practices as citizens (disloyal and traitorous toward Pakistan) (Usmani, 1977, p. 125). However, as noted above, such discourses were not novel and had been disseminated widely during the first anti-Ahmadi movement as well. The crucial difference however was that in 1974 these were aligned with democratic procedures, thereby finding legitimacy within the political field at large.

During the proceedings, Ahmadi representatives were asked if they regarded non-Ahmadis as non-Muslims. Ghafoor Ahmed, an MNA belonging to JI, maintains that the response of the Ahmadis was an unequivocal yes, which had the effect of angering even the more secularly inclined MNAs who had been wary of the Ahmadi issue being brought to the National Assembly.¹⁷ According to Sherbaz Mazari, an independent MNA, Ahmadi leaders in the National Assembly said “extremely provocative” things and that perhaps if they had been more tactful, some people might have felt differently about the proposed Amendment.¹⁸ Another MNA Gul Aurangzeb maintains that during the course of the inquiry, Ahmadi representatives maintained that the founder of the community and his descendants were incapable of any physical ailment, thus portraying their leaders as superhuman. This irked MNAs antagonistic toward Ahmadiyya religious beliefs.¹⁹ Sahabzada Farooq Ali maintains that the Ahmad representatives referred to Ahmadis as “the truly faithful and true ones” and to non-Ahmadis as Muslims who were *gumrah*, or deviants from the true path.

Additionally, there were a number of factors that delimited the autonomy MNAs had about voting for the Amendment. Before the proceedings began, Bhutto publicly declared that MNAs would enjoy complete freedom to vote for or against the Constitutional Amendment as they saw fit (*Dawn*, Karachi, June 14, 1974). Personal interviews conducted with a number of MNAs contradict this. They also suggest other opportunities and constraints perceived by MNAs. Together, these varied stories reveal a significantly transformed political field and a concomitant and gradual shift in the *doxa* of the political field in Pakistan. I characterize this shift as the acceptance of a new rule that popular religious sentiments cannot be legitimately marginalized by any section of the political elite.

Gul Aurangzeb, an MNA belonging to Muslim League (Qayyum), was given the directive by his Party Head to vote against the Ahmadis as Bhutto wanted the Amendment to go through in order to gain popularity among the people. According to Aurangzeb, "We, the members of ML (Q) were sold by Qayyum *Sahib* [Mr. Qayyum] to Bhutto." Furthermore, he held, "In the parliament there was no question of anybody opposing Bhutto's orders and nobody was willing to face the public outside." Aurangzeb proceeded to tell me of the difficulties he would have faced from the electorate when he would have returned from the capital to his home constituency of Swat, an increasingly Islamicized area in the northern areas of Pakistan. According to Aurangzeb, "In my country if you do not agree with the mobs, you are declared a traitor." He added that if he had a free choice, he would have abstained from voting. A very similar story was related to me by another MNA Sherbaz Mazari, an Independent in the 1974 Assembly. With misting eyes, Mazari told me that he had erred in not taking a stance at that moment and that he had voted with the crowd in fear of Bhutto. According to Mazari, MNAs from Islamist parties and Bhutto himself personally approached and asked him to vote for the Amendment.

Other MNAs had other motivations. Ahmad Raza Kasuri, an Independent and an ardent critic of Bhutto both inside and outside the Assembly, was the first MNA to raise the Ahmadi issue in the National Assembly immediately in the aftermath of the May 29 events.²⁰ He had had a two-fold motivation for raising the Ahmadi issue in the National Assembly: one, to put political pressure on Bhutto, and second, because of his personal religious convictions about Ahmadiyya faith, which he regards as heretical. For Kasuri, the defining feature of a Muslim is the love and affection they have for Prophet Mohammad. Because Islam is the official religion of Pakistan, it was wholly lawful to make this definition legal and thereby exclude Ahmadis.

If Kasuri was unambiguous about the primacy of religion in justifying the Amendment, others such as Justice Samdani, head of the Rabwah Tribunal, were conflicted about making religion central to public, political life. On the one hand, Samdani clearly referred to the Second Constitutional Amendment as akin to "persecution" of a vulnerable minority. Equally unambiguously, Samdani acknowledged the centrality of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) traditions²¹ that are intolerant toward heresy and apostasy and render non-Muslims as second-class citizens. Yet at the same time Samdani argued that he was in favor of a "true Islamic state" based on principles of justice and equality. However, because of the impossibility of

realizing such a state, he was “in favor of secularism.” In other words, for Samdani, the egalitarian ethos of Islam stood in opposition to socially constructed *fiqh* norms that punish apostasy. Even in Samdani’s rejection of an “Islamic state,” the perfection of such a state was affirmed.

Raja Tridev Roy, a Buddhist hailing from Chittagong Hill Tracks in Bangladesh was the Minister of Minority Affairs at the time. He maintains that he was personally not in favor of the Amendment but as a non-Muslim felt that “this is a matter of theology and dictation of Islam and ... beyond my ability and my responsibility.” That Roy felt that his religious status excluded his voice in the national debate on the religious status of Ahmadis itself points to a fundamental transformation of the political field, especially when we recall the role played by non-Muslims members of the Constituent Assembly during debates on the Objectives Resolution in 1949.

Ghafoor Ahmad, an MNA belonging to JI, voted autonomously and consistently with JI’s political project of Islamic constitutionalism within a democratic framework. He maintains that he voted for the Amendment on the basis of his religious beliefs and because the 1973 Constitution declared Islam the state religion of Pakistan. According to Ahmad, it is of utmost importance to determine who is and is not a Muslim since only a Muslim can be the Head of an Islamic State.

In short, the above interviews suggest a radically different habitus of the political field than that of the bureaucratic elite in the 1950s. My analysis reveals a multiplicity of dispositions about democracy, nationalism, and religion, all of which together cohered to produce the nationalist policy of exclusion of Ahmadis. Bourdieu has aptly used the notions of signifier and signified to capture the particular force through which groups are formed in a democratic system: the delegate serves as a signifier that signifies to the group that it exists, and the act of delegation enables an act of political transcendence whereby “what was merely a collection of several persons” emerges as “a social body” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 208). The year 1974 constituted just such a moment in which the delegate and the delegated referenced each other within an authoritarian-populist regime to reconstitute the symbolic boundaries of the nation through the exclusion of Ahmadis from the body politic.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has argued that the Pakistani state’s shift from the accommodation to exclusion of Ahmadis was contingent on struggles for political and

symbolic power within historically specific political fields. In 1953, the anti-Ahmadi movement played right into the dynamics of intrastate competition for state power among bureaucrats and politicians. The movement eventually became the means for the institutionalization of the authoritarian military regime of Ayub Khan. The nationalist policy of accommodation of Ahmadis in 1953 was constituted through this political trajectory, with the anti-Ahmadi and anti-state framing strategies employed by the religious movement providing further ammunition. In 1974 however, the demand that the Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority was framed as democratic and nationalist. This narrative was accepted by Bhutto and MNAs to acquire symbolic capital, and because of the imperatives of electoral politics and the salience of Muslim politics in the political field. The transformation of the political field that I have analyzed attests to the ways in which religious actors refashioned themselves across the two moments through becoming central players in electoral politics, denouncing violence, and aligning their movement frames with democracy and a Muslim nationalist discourse.

The usefulness of the concept of political field lies precisely in the way it alerts us that “political ideologies do not simply ‘reflect’ the social bases of political action – if anything, the opposite is true: political struggle is precisely a fight over the capacity to impose a legitimate vision of social space and its relation to the political field, i.e., to convert political capital (control over the instruments of political representation) into symbolic power (the prestige of being the effective ‘delegate’ of a social group)” (De Leon, Desai, & Tugal, 2009; Eyal, 2005, p. 153). Both moments of accommodation and exclusion of Ahmadis depict that citizenship classifications are a function of interactive politics in which religious and political signifiers are contested and strategically deployed to constitute political practices. Furthermore, the framework of political fields that I have employed depicts that these practices were a product of the relation between the habitus of political actors and the historically specific political fields in which they were embedded. Political dispositions structured practices of nationalist policy formation through historically concrete political and symbolic struggles, in turn producing nationalist policies that were strategic and contingent.

In conclusion, the present paper offers following directions for future research. First, it provides an opportunity to enhance our understandings of politics in Muslim societies through its examination of state–religious movement interactions undertaken through a comparative/historical analysis of two outcomes in a single national case. Second, insights from this

paper are relevant for scholars of nationalism interested in the nation/religion/state nexus. The present analysis of nationalist shifts within the single case of Pakistan clearly shows that boundaries of signifiers of the nation such as religion are fluid and open to multiple and contested definitions. Finally, one of the central concerns occupying many analysts (e.g., Casanova, 1994; Hefner, 2001; Kymlicka, 1985) is the fate of national minorities in political orders that may be procedurally democratic yet pave the way for majority groups to strip minorities of their social and political rights. By looking at a similar transition in Pakistan, the findings of this paper can be used to theorize the dangers of majoritarian democracy in contexts where constitutions are stripped of liberal rights and made subservient to popular will.

NOTES

1. The term *ulema* refers to traditional Muslim authorities trained in Islamic jurisprudence.

2. I define nationalist policy as the set of institutional practices through which states attempt to normalize particular nationalist discourses by reifying specific practical categories of classification.

3. Political sociologists have increasingly begun to highlight the relevance of Bourdieu's sociology for exploring political processes through which classifications among citizens (or subjects) are managed (e.g., Eyal, 2005; Go, 2008; Ray, 1999; Steinmetz, 2007, 2008; Wacquant, 2005).

4. For example, the military regime of Ayub Khan (1958–1969), Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988), and Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008).

5. http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_religion.pdf. Accessed on July 26, 2010. Personal interviews reveal that Ahmadis consider their numbers significantly underrepresented by the Government.

6. The 1984 Ordinance has led to a huge number of Ahmadis being charged and punished on grounds of defiling Islam, blasphemy, and similar charges. A number of international and local NGOs (including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan) and the Ahmadi-run website <http://www.thepersecuton.org> routinely document instances of human rights abuses.

7. *Shari'a* refers to the law of Islam, which has roots in Qur'an and in accounts of the life of the Prophet Mohammad.

8. Although *ulema* and Islamists oftentimes overlap in religious ideology, the two groups constitute distinct religious groups. In general, *ulema* are trained in traditional sites of learning, or *madrassas*, where they receive instruction through a study of foundational religious texts on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) in addition to Quran and *Sunnah* (sayings and habits of Prophet Mohammad) (Zaman, 2002). For *ulema*, traditional religious learning and personal conduct are the central modes through which a Muslim religious identity is realized and perfected. Islamists differ markedly in their political orientations in that while wedded to the same sources of

religious learning as the *ulema*, they seek to restore the primacy of Islamic norms through applying them to contemporary social and political realities. Hence, while the *ulema* may be politically indifferent, Islamists are “explicitly and intentionally political” (Euben & Zaman, 2009, p. 4).

9. The first draft, presented in 1950, was severely criticized across Pakistan, but particularly in East Pakistan, for reducing the numerical majority of East Pakistan in the legislature by giving East Pakistan the same representation as the four provinces of West Pakistan. In response to the outcry, it was decided that suggestions and proposals would be solicited from the public until January 1951, after which a second draft would be prepared and submitted.

10. *The Federation of Pakistan v. Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan*. PLD 1955 Federal Court 240.

11. Some of the changes included state permission for Muslim men to undertake more than one marriage, changes in divorce laws as a result of which men could not divorce women arbitrarily, and increase in the legal age at which girls could marry from 14 to 16 (Ansari, 2009).

12. Interview with K. M. A. Samdani. Islamabad, Pakistan, January 30, 2008.

13. My discussion of MTKN draws from personal interview conducted with Maulana Allah Wasaya, presently belonging to the top leadership of the MTKN. Islamabad, Pakistan, March 5, 2008.

14. For example, *Chattan* was banned by Punjab provincial authorities in 1968 because of the intensity of its anti-Ahmadi rhetoric. *Abdul Karim Shorish Kashmiri v. The State of West Pakistan*. PLD 1969 Lahore 289.

15. Interview with Sahabzada Farooq Ali. Multan, Pakistan, April 8, 2008.

16. Interview with Raja Tridev Roy. Islamabad, Pakistan, April 4, 2008.

17. Interview with Ghafoor Ahmad. Karachi, Pakistan, March 8, 2008.

18. Interview with Sherbaz Mazari. Karachi, Pakistan, March 9, 2008.

19. Interview with Gul Aurangzeb. Islamabad, Pakistan, March 4, 2008.

20. Interview with Ahmad Raza Kasuri. Islamabad, Pakistan, January 30, 2008.

21. See Friedmann (2003) for a discussion of heresy in Islamic history.

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